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Tempora Mutantur;

OR,

REASONS FOR THINKING

THAT IT IS

INCONSISTENT WITH THE WELFARE OF THIS KINGDOM,

To perſiſt in withholding from the

Roman Catholics,

The Political Power, Offices and Honors
Excluſively enjoyed by

Proteſtants;

AND,

That the Admiſſion of the ROMAN CATHOLICS,
To a ſuitable Participation of theſe,
Would not render them predominant

IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM,

Nor conſequently be followed
BY THOSE PERNICIOUS EFFECTS
Which are generally apprehended.

Il y dans les meilleurs conſeils de quoi deplaire: ils viennent d'ailleurs que de notre eſprit, c'eſt aſſez pour etre rejettis d'abord par preſumption & par humeur; & ſuivis ſeulement par neceſſité ou par reflexion. LA BRYERE.

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REASONS for THINKING,

&c. &c.

WITHOUT ſtopping to enquire whether the prohibitions and diſqualifications, under which the *Roman Catholics* of this kingdom *formerly* laboured, were *expedient* or *impolitic*; or whether the manner in which theſe were removed was calculated to *extinguiſh*, or to *perpetuate* religious jealouſy and diſcord; in ſhort, without miſemploying my time in any unſeaſonable, ſuperfluous or invidious reſearch whatſoever, I ſhall haſten to lay before my Proteſtant fellow-ſubjects, thoſe reaſons which have diſpoſed me to think, *that it is inconſiſtent with the welfare of this kingdom, to perſiſt in withholding from the Catholics the political power, offices and honours ſtill excluſively enjoyed by Proteſtants—and that the admiſſion of the Catholics to a ſuitable participation of theſe would not render them predominant in the political ſyſtem, nor conſequently be followed by thoſe pernicious effects which are generally apprehended.*

The conſtituent parts of the welfare of a Nation are, *internal tranquillity*, *liberty*, *opulence* and *independence*.

That the *internal tranquillity* of this kingdom muſt be extremely precarious, ſo long as *Catholic excluſion*

ſhall continue, ſeems to me to admit of little diſpute. It cannot, I think, be expected, by any perſon acquainted with human nature, that the Noblemen, Gentlemen, and wealthy Merchants amongſt the *Catholics*, however appearances may beſpeak the contrary, will *ever* be reconciled to the exiſting monopoly of political power, offices and honours. The pride of ſome muſt be thereby neceſſarily outraged, and the envy of others, neceſſarily excited and conſequently diſſatisfaction *muſt* be prevalent amongſt them. Much leſs can it be expected that enterprizing Catholics of moderate properties, endowed by nature and education with all the qualities requiſite to the attainment of conſpicuity in the political world, will patiently acquieſce in the excluſion of their patrons and kinſmen from political power, and its concomitant opportunities of gratifying *their*, ambition and improving *their* fortunes.

And as to the lower claſs of Catholics, it is natural to preſume, that their conduct will with little variation be ſubſervient to the views and intereſts of the more opulent and enterprizing of their communion. Thus then, I think, there are ſufficient grounds for ſuſpecting, that ſo long as political power ſhall be with-held from the Catholics, there will be, as the late Mr. Burke ſaid, "*a Bank of diſcontent in this kingdom, accumulating every hour, and on which every deſcription of ſeditious perſons may draw at pleaſure.*" The individuals of the higher orders of the Catholics, according to the peculiarities of their ſeveral diſpoſitions and circumſtances, will either be diſpoſed to revolt openly, to foment Rebellion clandeſtinely, or to obſerve a diſloyal neutrality. Every avenue to preferment and wealth being cloſed, enterprizing Catholics will readily engage in any project whatſoever, tending to the annihilation of the preſent illiberal *ſyſtem of excluſion*. And the lower orders of Catholics will be perpetually kept

kept in a dangerous ſtate of alienation from the Government of this kingdom. *Facies non omnibus una, nec diverſa tamen.*

Internal diſturbances are manifeſtly preclusive of the enjoyment of *liberty*. While civil diſſenſions prevail, juſtice is never uniformly adminiſtered with ſcrupulous impartiality. And when ſuch diſſenſions burſt forth into commotions, perſons, properties and lives become no longer ſecure. If then *Catholic excluſion* be unfavourable to *internal tranquillity*, it muſt, mediately, be ſo, to *civil liberty*. But though the internal tranquillity of this kingdom were to remain undiſturbed, yet *liberty* can never, in my opinion, flouriſh under the preſent ſyſtem of political excluſion; becauſe, in order to prevent the operation of obvious cauſes of internal convulſions, ſuch ſyſtem muſt be invariably accompanied by defenſive meaſures, altogether incongenial with the recognized principles of civil liberty.

Internal diſturbances, likewiſe, impede the increaſe of *national opulence*. Countries, in which exiſting circumſtances afford a proſpect of civil commotions, are neither the proper nurſeries, nor proper abodes of induſtrious traders and manufacturers. In ſuch countries, a ſpirit of *political* enterpriſe will always be more common than a ſpirit of *commercial* enterpriſe. Capitals will be but rarely accumulated, and ſeldom beneficially employed, and phyſical advantages left comparatively neglected.

Both *internal tranquility* and *opulence* are confeſſedly neceſſary to the preſervation of *national independence*. A poor, diſtracted, paralyſed nation, eſpecially if ſituated in the neighbourhood of a united and opulent one, cannot long preſerve its independence. As for this kingdom, if the Proteſtants, on one hand, tenaciouſly with-hold political power from the Catholics,

and theſe, on the other, purſue it with redoubled ardour, as there is ample reaſon to ſuſpect they will, *(nitimur in vetitum ſemper, cupimuſque negatum)* the former, I am perſuaded, finally perceiving their inability to contend againſt conſolidated multitudes, irritated, alienated, and rendered *unappeaſable*, will reſort to a humiliating legiſlative Union with England, as the only remaining expedient by which they may hope to eſcape vindictive retaliation.

Having thus briefly aſſigned my reaſons for thinking that *Catholic excluſion* is inconſiſtent with the welfare of this kingdom, inaſmuch as it militates againſt each of its conſtituent parts, *internal tranquillity*, *liberty*, *opulence* and *independence*, I ſhall proceed to offer thoſe reaſons which incline me to think that the admiſſion of the Catholics to a ſuitable participation of the political power, offices and honours actually engroſſed by the Proteſtants, would not render the former predominant in the political ſyſtem; nor conſequently be followed by thoſe pernicious effects which are generally apprehended.

That *political power naturally follows the balance of property in land*, is a truth diſcovered and eſtabliſhed by Harrington, received by ſeveral eminent political writers of the preſent century, and warmly aſſented to by the ſagacious Preſident of the United States of America, in his Hiſtory of Republics.

If then it be true that *political power follows the balance of property in land*, the Proteſtants of this kingdom, in whoſe favour ſuch balance obviouſly is in a moſt diſproportionate degree, muſt in a ſimilar degree, neceſſarily preponderate in the Legiſlature, after the admiſſion of the Catholics. Nor can the Proteſtants be deſpoiled of this balance of property by any other means than a general and ſucceſsful inſurrection on the part of the Catholics; which, for reaſons already given

given, is much more likely to be cauſed by their *excluſion* from, than their *admiſſion* into, the Legiſlature.

Perhaps there never was hatched in the brain of a timid viſionary, a more extravagant abſurdity than the opinion which is current amongſt many, namely, that the admiſſion of the Catholics into the Legiſlature would endanger the properties of the Proteſtants. How is it poſſible that the repeal of a law, having for its object the deſpoliation of the Proteſtant proprietors of the ſoil, could take place in an aſſembly, 4-5ths of the members whereof were of this deſcription? On the other hand, ſuppoſe by purchaſe, marriage, or bequeſt, the Catholics, (which is extremely improbable) were to acquire, in the lapſe of time, the *balance of property in land*, and thereby eventually obtain that predominance in the political ſyſtem, which the Proteſtants actually poſſeſs, is it reaſonable to apprehend, that for the malevolent purpoſe of diſpoſſeſſing an inconſiderable number of Proteſtant landlords, they would repeal laws, whereby their own poſſeſſions, derived from Proteſtants, were ſecured?

Circumſtanced as property is at preſent in this kingdom, I am perſuaded that not more, (perhaps not ſo many,) as *ten* Catholics would be choſen for counties, and about twice that number for boroughs. Roman Catholics holding profitable, terminable leaſes under Proteſtants, certainly would not (as indeed experience has already proved) raſhly gratify their own wiſhes in oppoſition to thoſe of their landlords. And I cannot think that the greater *Borough patrons*, as they are called, would abridge their political power, for a trifling tranſitory augmentation of their wealth.

If then it be highly probable that not more than *thirty* Catholics could procure ſeats in the lower houſe, what danger, I aſk, could poſſibly reſult from allowing them to participate with Proteſtants the right of legiſlation?

legiſlation? What danger, *under any circumſtances whatſoever*, could poſſibly reſult from the commixture of *thirty* Catholic with TWO HUNDRED AND SEVENTY Proteſtant Repreſentatives? But can it be ſuppoſed that thoſe Catholics, who might now, on *juſtifiable* grounds, be hoſtile to the exiſting eſtabliſhments, would be ſo far after their admiſſion into the Legiſlature? Can it be ſuppoſed that for the ſpecific purpoſe of ſubverting any one of theſe eſtabliſhments, they would form themſelves into an impenetrable faction, and thus, not only virtually exclude themſelves from thoſe honours, offices and emoluments, which, it is more than probable, are actually their chief incentives to ſeek for ſeats in Parliament; but take the moſt effectual ſtep to alarm and unite the Proteſtants, and drive them to avail themſelves of their predominance in the Legiſlature, by *re-enacting* the preſent diſqualifying ſtatutes? Is it not rather more natural, more agreeable to the ſuggeſtions of common ſenſe, does it not manifeſt a ſuperior knowledge of human nature, to preſume that their individual parliamentary conduct would, for the moſt part, be governed by thoſe various motives by which other individuals have hitherto been governed?

There are many who think that the Catholics would not be ſatisfied with being admitted into the Legiſlature, unleſs their admiſſion was followed by a reform in the lower Houſe. Whether they would or would not be ſatisfied with the former, unaccompanied by the latter, I ſhall not take upon me to ſay. But this I will venture to ſay, that if it be true, that *political power follows the balance of property in land*, there is no meaſure which the Catholics ſhould deprecate more earneſtly, and reſiſt more ſtrenuouſly, than an abolition of boroughs; becauſe ſuch a meaſure would obviouſly be tantamount to an excluſion of all

their

their monied or commercial men, consequently greatly reduce their number. At all events the Catholics, *as such*, must be conciliated by being admitted to share the right of legislation, and all offices and honours, with the Protestants; and, as *Roman Catholics*, could not possibly be irritated by an opposition to Parliamentary Reform; the grounds of such opposition being extremely dissimilar from those of an opposition to their present claims.

Others are averse to admitting the Catholics into the Legislature, under a persuasion that their admission would be followed, at no great distance, by a Separation of this kingdom from Great Britain. Granting that the Catholics were inimical to the subsisting Connexion between the Sister Kingdoms, of which, however, no substantial proof exists, they could not effect its dissolution until they acquired a predominance in the Legislature. But this, as was before shewn, they could not acquire, until they attained the balance of property in land: which with every circumstance in their favour and against the Protestants, they could not attain, perhaps before the expiration of the approaching century: when, it is extremely likely, the political aspect of Europe will be entirely changed—existing connexions, alliances and fæderations annulled or commuted—and religion and politics disunited for ever.

Others again say that the downfal of the Protestant Church must inevitably follow the admission of the Catholics into the legislature. But it has already been shewn that the Catholics, acting in a body in Parliament, must necessarily be overpowered by the Protestants. How then can the Church of the latter be overthrown? And here it may not be amiss to observe, that as religious toleration has become prevalent throughout Europe, and most assuredly

redly will continue to be ſo, and as experience has evinced that a *tolerated* religion, under the ſuperintendance of a *needy* Prieſthood, always gains ground on an eſtabliſhed one, under the ſuperintendence of a *wealthy* Prieſthood, no enlightened lay Catholic, zealouſly and conſcientiouſly attached to his religion, could wiſh to ſee its miniſters in the dangerous enjoyment of the *inertifying* revenues of an eſtabliſhed Church.

If then it ſhall appear to others as it does to me, that the actual excluſion of the Catholics from political power is inconſiſtent with the welfare of this Kingdom; and that thoſe pernicious effects, which are generally expected to reſult from their admiſſion into the legiſlature, are either imaginary, or much more likely to enſue from their *excluſion*, than their *admiſſion*; and if Parliament ſhall in conſequence think it expedient to extend to them the right of Legiſlation, I truſt that in conferring this laſt favour, they will conform more ſtrictly than heretofore to *Seneca's* advice. "Give, as you would receive, cheerfully and without heſitation."

THE END